

Story 2163 (1999 Tape 9)

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Location: Trabzon, capital of
Trabzon Province

Date: February 9, 1999

Lazes¹ Rescue Architect from Minaret

A group of Lazes one day decided to build a mosque for their village. They found an architect to direct their construction of this building, and work on the project began at once. After more than a month the mosque was completed, and then it was time to provide a minaret for it

They assembled all of the bricks and mortar needed, and they planned to complete construction of the minaret in one day. The architect himself chose to lay up the bricks for this minaret. As the minaret grew taller and taller, the Lazes on the ground threw up to the architect single bricks and tiny bags of mortar. Working together in this way, they actually completed the minaret in a

¹The word Laz originally referred to an ethnic minority living along the extreme eastern end of the Turkish Black Sea coast, mainly in Trabzon and Rize provinces. As time has passed, the term has broadened to include all Turkish residents living along the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. The Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept, and there are countless jokes and anecdotes that so picture them. This stereotype, like most others, is baseless, for Lazes are much like other people.

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single

But then, to their dismay, they faced a problem to which they had given no thought. The stairs inside the minaret had not yet been built, and as a result the architect was stranded on top of that tower with no way to get down. The Lazes tried to devise some means of getting the architect down safely. At first no one could provide a solution for their problem. Then a young man stepped forth from the crowd and said, "Don't worry about this difficulty. It can be handled easily. I saw a similar case solved while I was in the military service. A man had fallen into a deep well, and we saved him by pulling him out of that place with a rope. Bring me a strong but light rope."

The Laz with the strongest arm threw one end of the rope to the top of the minaret, where the architect caught it. The former military man shouted up to the architect, "Tie that end of the rope around your waist." After the man above had done this, all those on the ground gave a very strong pull on the rope.